Chinese coolies handling freight.

Chinese junks in Tsing-tao harbor.

JAPAN AND HER "MONROE DOCTRINE" FOR THE FAR EAST

Asia for the Asiatics Declared to Mean the End of the Open Door Policy in China

By ALFRED M. BRACE.

IN a palace of the ancient city of Pekin, whose gateway is still guarded by the royal lions of the Manchus, Oriental statesmen for several weeks have been engaged in a diplomatic parley. The principal figures in the negotiations are President Yaun Shih-k'ai, leader of a great teeming population of 400,000,000 Chinese, and M. Hioki, Japanese Minister to China, representative of a virile race who have taken the Rising Sun as the symbol of their ambition and in a few brief decades have forged from the position of an unknown feudal people to that of a first class Power. Thus far the two Governments have reached an agreement on only a few of the items contained in the series of demands which Japan has presented to China. But the hand of the Japanese has been clearly shown and the discussion initiated by the Japanese at Pekin forbodes as significant changes in the political world as the thundering of the guns at the Dardenelles.

For many years the idea of Asia for the Asiatic has grown and spread in the Far East. It has been manifest in the reiterated desire of the Filipinos for freedom from American rule and for a government of their own. It crops forth in the strange rumor current in the interior of China that some day a great deliverer will come out of the west to sweep the foreigner into the sea.

It is ever present in the mind of the Japanese and a part of his dream of empire. It is a sort of Monroe Doctrine of the Far East that has suddenly crystallized into definite form during the present war, with Japan as its sponsor and champion. Count Okuma, Premier of Japan, who has just been returned to power, has been telling the voters, "This is a new era for Japan." The demands which Japan is pressing upon China are the pronunciamento by which Japan is saying to the rest of the world, "Hands off."

Hostilities of the belligerents in the Far East during the past few months have been eclipsed for the most part by the fighting in Europe. The hopeless stand of the isolated German garrison at Tsing-tao against the Japanese, the mysterious manœuvres of the German Pacific squadron under Admiral von Spee among the island of the South Seas, the raid of the Emden upon British commerce in the Indian Ocean, these were picturesque rather than important from a military standpoint. Now the British battle cruiser Triumph, which helped shatter the Tsing-tao forts on the Yellow Sea last November in cooperation with the Japanese fleet, is training its guns on the inner forts of the Dardanelles; the German Pacific squadron litters the ocean floor off the Falkland Islands and the German soldiers of Tsing-tao await the end of the war in their temple prisons in Japan.

What made the warfare in the Far East important was the rare opportunity given to Japan not only to remove Germany, her most dangerous commercial rival in China, from her path, but to attain the dominating position in the Far East as well. The weakness of China, the occupation of the European Powers elsewhere and the disinterestedness of the United States in a problem that seems so remote have been the elements in the situation that have given Japan her chance to dictate to China. Together they have made possible the present crisis in the Far East and permitted Japan to force an issue in which the whole trend of developments in the Pacific basin may be decided.

"A Monroe Doctrine for the Far East." The striking of such a note is likely to bring a sympathetic response in America, where the Monroe Doctrine is the basis of foreign policy and where there is widespread admiration for Japan in her effort to assume equal station among the Powers of the world. Americans would probably be the first to support Japan in the application of a Monroe Doctrine for the Far East if it were based upon principles similar to those guiding the policy of the United States in relation to sister republics of South and Central America. For in some ways the present position of Japan is similar to that of the young republic of the United States in 1823 when President Monroe sent his famous message to Congress.

The development of Japan has been menaced by Western Powers, just as that of the United States in the critical years from 1815 to 1822 was menaced by the aggressive policy of the holy alliance in the Western Hemisphere. From Vladivostok, home of the bear in the north, to the French port of Saigon in Indo-China Japan witnessed for years the establishment of bases from which Western Powers might operate against her. It cost her the lifeblood of her people and almost a bankrupt treasury to dislodge the Russian menace.

Tsing-tao, which from the Shantung Promontory commands trade routes important to Japan's life, she has at length wrenched from the German Empire. And one of the recent demands upon which Japan is insistent is that China shall not alienate or lease to other countries any port, harbor or island on the coast of China. Such a demand seems reasonable. For as long as China remains as weak as she is to-day and as prone to yield her territory under pressure brought by other Powers, Japan is justified in taking steps which will insure her shores from a death blow from the mainland, even if it require the coercion of China.

With a view to insuring permanent peace and safety and the unharried development of China and Japan Japanese could have further paralleled the principles of American policy in the Western Hemisphere by backing the proposition that no Western Power shall intervene in the affairs of China to change the form of government or control the will of the people, that no Western Power shall extend its territorial holdings by lease or otherwise in China and that China shall make no permanent alliances with European Powers. But the emphasis has been placed by the Japanese upon different matters.

The Japanese programme looks not to China's welfare but to Japan's aggrandizement. The recent proposals made to China and still under discussion at Pekin can only be logically interpreted as an attempt to exclude European and American influence in order that Japan may reap commercial privileges, obtain new spheres of influence on Chinese soil, limit the Chinese in their governmental functions and dictate Chinese governmental policy from Pekin. Acquiescence in the demands would mean a Japanizing of China of sinister import not only to China but to the whole world.

The Japanese method of procedure in the presentation of her propositions to the Chinese Government has been interesting and at stages dramatic. The story has come from Pekin that during the first audience which the Japanese Minister had with President Yuan Shi-k'ai on the matters in dispute the Minister did all the talking, while Yuan Shih-k'ai, a master in statecraft, sat with immobile face, not uttering a word.

Even Pekin, a city long calloused by international intrigue, was shocked when Japan's desires were made known. Then it came to light that whereas Japan had presented twenty-one demands to China she had made known only twelve of them to the other Powers. Newspaper correspondents at Pekin are said to have called upon the Japanese Minister and to have asked for an explanation, failing which they made known to the world the interesting discrepancy.

The first and most important of the Japanese proposals have been agreed to by China. They insure the maintenance of Japan's position in South Manchuria by the extension of the lease of Port Arthur and the South Manchuria, Mukden-Antung and K'rin-Changchun railways to ninety-nine years. China also agrees to first get the consent of Japan before she grants new railway concessions in this district to any third Power and before she hypothecates the taxes of this district for any loan. The according of full extraterritoriality to Japanese immigrants to Manchuria and the granting of sweeping privileges to the Japanese in East Mongolia the Chinese hold out against and the last reports promise a deadlock and possible break between the two countries on these demands.

If Japan is successful she will become the virtual administrator in these districts, where she already has had extensive control. In Shantung province, in which was the German territory of Kiao-chow and the German port of Tsing-tao, Japan insists that China consent to the transfer of all the privileges formerly enjoyed by the German Government and in addition grant Japan new railroad concessions and open new treaty ports in this province. The result will be the same sort of control by Japan in this rich province as in South Manchuria.

Fokien, another province which has been a special field of activity for the Japanese, is slated by them for a control similiar to that which they have obtained over South Manchuria and Shantung. In brief the other proposals are that, "the Chinese Government shall employ forceful Japanese as advisers in political, financial and military affairs," that China and Japan shall jointly police "important" places in China, that China shall purchase half her arms and ammunition from Japan or otherwise establish factories in China which employ Japanese experts and use Japanese materials, that China shall grant Japan new concessions for the building of railroads in the Yangtse River region, further rights in connection with Hayehping Mining Company of that region which will give the Japanese definite control of great iron mines and the opportunity to Japan for religious and educational propaganda.

This is the sort of Monroe Doctrine over which Japan proposes to hoist the emblem of the Rising Sun. It is as though the United States Government, impressed by the desirability of the South American markets for its own exclusive use, were to coerce South American republics into turning over their richest resources to her capitalists and to grant special spheres of influence from which competitors would be barred. And then having obtained these privileges, as if the United States Government, to insure a permanence of her position, were to require the South American republics to make United States citizens Cabinet officers and advisers and to employ American constabulary to assist in policing their territory.

If the United States did start upon such a programme of absorption Japan's voice would be loud among those of the Powers in exclamations of protest against such an innovation. But the arguments that would hold true in this case can be applied to the Far East against the present Japanese attempt to usurp control by coercion of the exclusive trade with large sections of the Chinese population. The Japanese have advantage of proximity to Chinese markets, of cheap factory labor, of an Oriental's understanding of Orientals. Her traders have shown marked ability to hold their own in open competition. And although Japan considers China her legitimate field of trade and the chief market for her wares, it would be harmful to Chinese interests as well as those of other Powers in China if the principle of equality of opportunity in trade were done away with to serve the ends of Japanese merchants and manufacturers.

The Japanese, relying upon a time honored ignorance in the United States of anything going on in the Far East, continue to give assurances that the open door will still be the guiding principle in China. There are different sentiments expressed, however, by those well qualified to speak. American merchants in China have been watching closely developments in Japanese spheres of influence.

Recent mails from China bring the report of the annual meeting of the American Association of China, made up of the principal American business men of China. Following is an extract from the report of the executive committee of that body:

"American cottons formerly held a premier position in Manchuria. • • • Under Russian occupation every nation stood on an equal footing in Manchuria. The same duties and charges were assessed against all and facilities for distributing goods and doing business were in general satisfactory. Now it is all changed.

"Under Japanese administration no chance to advance its own trade is overlooked, and to competitors the means taken appear to be a departure from fair trading. In fact they constitute a most serious violation of the open door principle upon which the diplomacy of the United States is based.

"Japanese competition takes the form of a system of rebates not only in freight and steamer rates but in remission of duties and charges which are assessed against all other nations. In addition to this many forms of petty annoyance have been worked out for the non-Japanese trader and the imitation of established trademarks is common.

"Now that the Japanese are in Shantung, not with the mere footholds that the Germans held in Tsing-tao, but with an apparent determination to dominate the province, the same tactics may be expected, since it would be exactly in line with the course pursued in Corea and Manchuria. With Dalny on the northern promontory and Tsing-tao on the southern Japan has secured a potential control of the trade of North China from the Russian frontier to the Yangtse River, upon whose valley her traders have long cast covetous eyes. In this connection it will become apparent that not only ourselves but other nationalities face a loss of trade.

"The policy of the United States Government in discouraging the investment of American capital in Chinese railways and in loans to the republic has been detrimental to our merchants, but as the Administration gains a clearer view of the situation in China and begins to recognize the things that must be done if the United States is to share in this vast trade area, there are possibilities of some modifications of this policy, which is believed to have been put forth without sufficient investigation and, at that, on sentimental grounds. This association should use every means in its power to awaken the Government in Washington to the necessity for a more vigorous policy in China to secure for us and to hold open when secured as liberal advantages for the extension of trade as are now enjoyed by the other nationalities."

The American merchant in China has not been alone in voicing his fears for the future based upon developments of the past. The same ideas as quoted above were vigorously expressed by the Shanghai branch of the Asiatic Association, an important British organization, last summer. The late W. W. Rockhill, former United States Minister to China and a close student of Far Eastern affairs, shortly before his death last autumn added his word to the chorus protesting against the closing of the door of opportunity to China.

It was in 1899, at a time when political intrigue at Pekin was at its height and the race for spheres of influence, strategic bases and railway concessions was going on right merrily, that Secretary of State Hay put forward the policy of the open door. The acceptance by the Powers of Secretary Hay's proposals stemmed the tide of encroachment upon China's resources which threatened to dismember the Celestial Empire. And Secretary Hay's success has been ranked as one of the most brilliant achievements of American diplomacy.

It made the United States special sponsor of the open door and seemed to point to an era of development in China in which equality of treatment for the commerce of all nations was to be recognized in the various spheres of influence and throughout China. And aside from its commercial aspects, the principle, in the opinion of Secretary Hay and others, stood for permanent peace and safety for China and the preservation of the territorial integrity of China. The open door and Chinese territorial integrity have gone hand in hand as the cardinal points in our Far Eastern policy.

Until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war this policy was upheld by able statesmanship. During the war Japan in strong terms placed herself on record as a defender of the open door when she renewed her alliance with Great Britain. One of the objects of that alliance is "the preservation of the common interests of all the Powers by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce of all nations in China."

In 1907 Japan made a similar pledge to France and in 1908 to the United States Government. By these agreements Japan assumed the place of the United States as the special guardian of the principle of the open door in China. How well she has assumed the responsibilities has been shown.

In the meantime the United States has lost prestige and influence in China. Business interests have made progress in spite of rather than because of the State Department. And China, while appreciating a traditional friendship that has always existed between the two countries, has become accustomed to seeing American friendship for her expressed by the setting aside of days of prayer for the republic and by words of advice from visiting Americans. In the big issues economic, financial and political which arise in Pekin, where questions vital to her national life are at stake, she has learned of recent years to turn elsewhere. But in the present crisis she has nowhere else to turn for support than to the United States.

Much of the discussion of American-Japanese relations is colored on one hand by jingoism and on the other by a soft sentimentality. Readers of the charming works of Lafcadio Hearn and visitors to the island of Nippon are apt to be hypnotized by a landscape that is fairyland and a people that are clever and courteous. On the other hand the "yellow peril" aspect of Japan's rise to power gets a liberal publicity.

Sooner or later we must come to a recognition of the fact that the United States has not a "yellow peril" to deal with, but a civilized, powerful, ambitious, hard headed Asiatic nation that intends to take advantage of every opportunity in the future as she has in the past to advance her military and economic position in the Far East at the expense of any competitor that she can dislodge.

Many Americans have become obsessed with the idea that war with Japan is inevitable and that the United States in the event of war would be thrashed. Any obstruction that the American Government puts in the way of Japanese ambition, they say, leads us nearer the brink. Let us, therefore, make haste to scuttle the Philippines before they get us into trouble, draw out of Asia and stay at home where we belong, they urge. Japan is the great American bogy.

If by any chance such a war were forced upon the United States it would be largely a financial and commercial war. The Japanese are at present taxed to the limit. Last year owing to the state of her finances Japan began material retrenchment in her naval programme. A half of the trade of Japan is with the United States and the destruction of that by the simple closing of United States markets would be a fatal blow.

The Panama Canal has made possible the gathering of the entire United States navy for the protection of the Pacific coast against the Japanese fleet after it had passed Pearl Harbor on its 8,000 mile voyage to attack the Pacific coast. And after Japan had taken the Philippine Islands the war would settle into a long distance contest in which Japan would have little hope against the tremendous resources that the United States could bring to bear in form of ships.

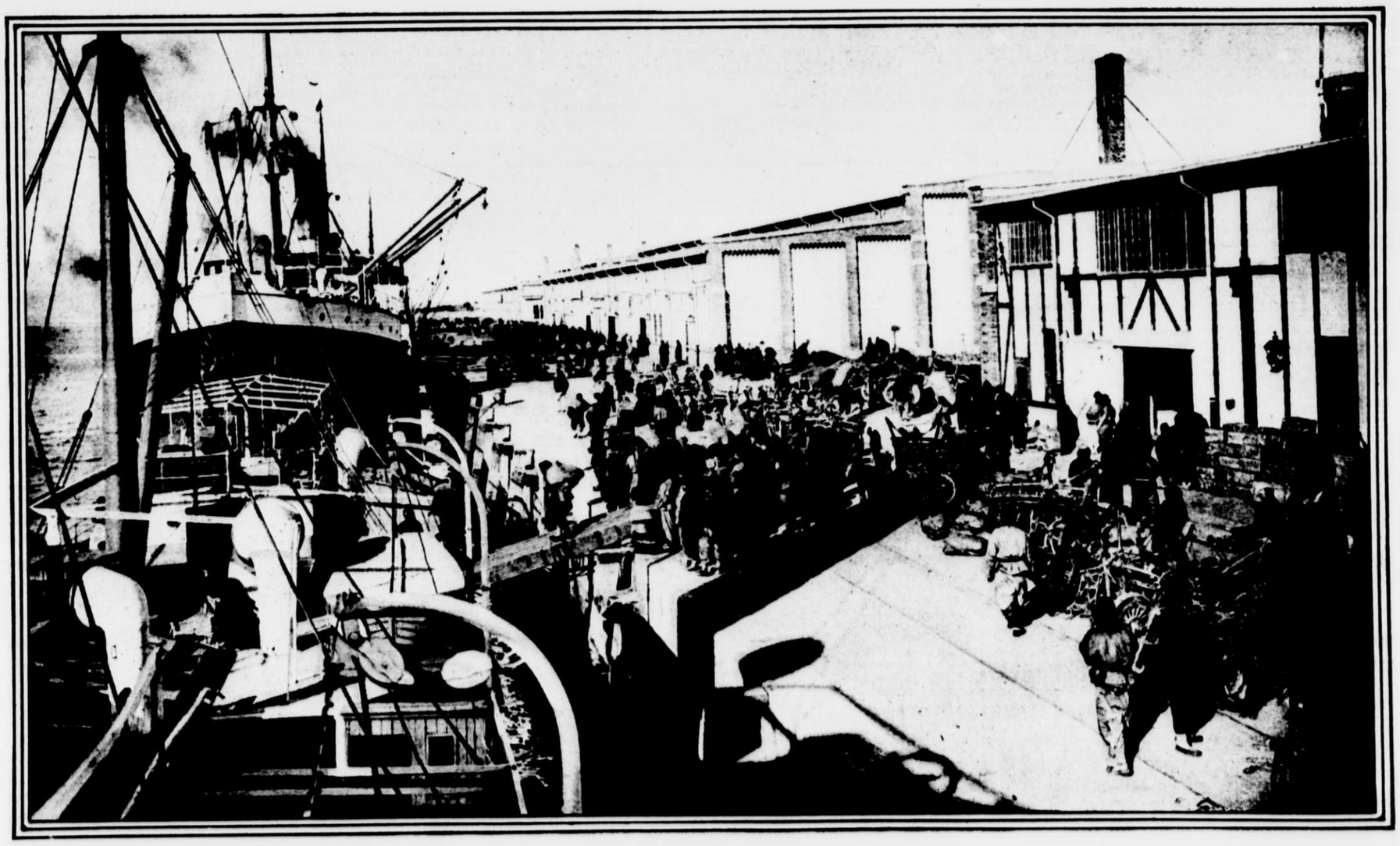
The most interesting development of such a war would be the attitude of Japan's present ally, Great Britain. Common sentiment in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the Malay Straits is as anti-Japanese as it is in San Francisco. Before the present war began there was a feeling among Britishers in China that the alliance with Japan had outlived its usefulness, and much criticism was privately expressed when Japan was brought into the present conflict.

In view of this sentiment it is unthinkable that Great Britain would wage common war on the United States with Japan. It is only reasonable to suppose that she would take measures which would either prevent Japan's initiating such a conflict or dissolve the alliance. Great Britain and the United States have stood for similar policies in China. They will both suffer from the success of Japan's programme.

The statesmen of Japan have been astute in the past and have made few mistakes. There is every reason to believe that war with the United States does not enter their minds—certainly not at this stage of Japan's development.

There is basis for real friendship between the United States and Japan. But that friendship does not depend upon a flood of perorations beginning with the time honored mention of Commodore Perry's visit to Yokohama harbor nor upon giving Japan a free hand to get a strangle hold upon China. Vigorous support of the principle of the open door at this crisis in the Far East would not undermine the amicable relations of the United States and Japan. It would lay the foundation for a much more certain friendship in the future.

Capture of Tsing-tao Called a Big Step in Nippon's Scheme of Aggrandizement



Wharves of Tsing-tao harbor.